

Political Theory

In this field the student will be expected to demonstrate graduate-level mastery of thinkers and themes from the history of political thought as well as contemporary political theory and philosophy, including all of the works listed on the comprehensive exam reading list available from the department or from the subfield coordinator. Graduate-level mastery presumes but means more than a basic acquaintance with each text's basic argument; students taking the examination will be expected to offer their own arguments about the questions addressed by the texts, drawing on them but not limited to them. They will also be expected to offer arguments about how to interpret and synthesize the texts themselves. Students will answer one question each in ancient and medieval political thought; modern (16th-18th century) political thought; 19th-20th-century and contemporary political theory; and general themes. Students should consult with the subfield coordinator at least six months before taking their exam. In order to prepare for these examinations,

1) Students should normally take the proseminar in political theory.

2) Students are very strongly encouraged to attend or (if possible) TA for the courses in the undergraduate sequence in the history of political thought:

POLI 333, ancient political thought

POLI 334, medieval and Renaissance political thought

POLI 433, early modern (17th and 18th century) political thought

POLI 434, 19th and early-20th century Political thought as needed to fill in gaps in their preparation.

Philosophy offers several similar courses which may be useful in the event of schedule conflicts.

3) Students should take at least three additional courses at the 500-level or above in political theory.

4) Students are encouraged to consult with the subfield coordinator about secondary texts, and additional primary texts, that could supplement or synthesize the works from the reading list on which the student will be examined.